

# Youth, Revolt, Recognition

The Young Generation during and after the “Arab Spring”

Edited by Isabel Schäfer



## Youth as Political Actors after the “Arab Spring”: The Case of Tunisia

by Carolina Silveira

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## Part II – Youth and Politics in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

### Youth as Political Actors after the “Arab Spring”: The Case of Tunisia

Carolina Silveira

#### Introduction

The series of demonstrations now commonly known as the “Arab Spring” ignited the Arab world in 2010/2011, and saw young people taking to the streets to protest against their corrupt government system hoping to make a change. The initial spark that aroused this wave of protests took place in Tunisia, as a humble fruit vendor set himself ablaze after being humiliated, beaten and robbed by police officers. The protests in Tunisia, which have since been dubbed the “Tunisian Revolution”, expanded across the Middle East in a domino effect that attracted attention the world over, largely thanks to young bloggers who organized demonstrations, filmed events as they happened, and distributed information online. There is no denying the widespread attention garnered by the Arab spring demonstrations, but we must now consider the results and political changes achieved since these events. The focus of this paper lies on youth political involvement in Tunisia, with the aim of providing an understanding of the ways in which young people have tried to gain influence, both through traditional politics, as well as through alternative methods of political engagement, such as civil society groups and social networking sites. The demographics in Tunisian society will be considered as a starting point, followed by an investigation of youth political representation.

Before delving into an analysis of young people as political actors, it is important to define ‘youth’ and to look at the demographics that shape society in Arab world, and more specifically, in Tunisia. In the context of the Arab spring, however, this task is not as straightforward as it might seem. In ‘Problematizing Arab Youth’, Emma Murphy points out that little attention has been given by scholars to the difficulties of identifying ‘on whom the term [youth] might legitimately be conferred or what constitutes the set of interests and identities which enable ‘youths’ to cohere into a distinct sub-set’.<sup>36</sup> However, focusing on how we frame the youth segment is essential if we are to understand ‘who they were, what it was they wanted or their significance as a rising social and political force’<sup>37</sup> in Tunisia. Although often described as a youth led movement, many who were deeply engaged in the protests may have fallen outside of the ‘youth’ age bracket, which according to UNESCO (the United Nations’ educational, scientific and cultural organization), lies between the ages of 15 and 24. This strict classification becomes more complex with UNESCO’s additional understanding of ‘youth’ as a ‘period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community.’<sup>38</sup> Taking the latter definition as a point of analysis, ‘youth’ becomes a fluid segment rather than a fixed age group. This conceptualization serves the purposes of this paper well, as many involved in the Arab Spring demonstrations may have fallen outwith the 15 to 24 age bracket, but found themselves in a period

<sup>36</sup> Emma C. Murphy, “Problematizing Arab Youth: Generational Narratives of Systemic Failure.” *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 1 (2012): p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> UNESCO (2014): “Youth-Definition.” Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>.

of transition between dependency and adulthood. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the statistics used throughout this paper come from secondary sources, and therefore reflect age categories of 'youth' as used in each particular research cited; the general idea of 'youth' will nonetheless retain its broader meaning.

### Conceptualising Tunisia's youth

The 'youth' segment, particularly in the context of the Arab world, can be analysed in a variety of ways, as Murphy explains. She proposes four different approaches to conceptualising the Arab youth: 1) as a demographic 'bulge'; 2) as a human resources issue; 3) as a stage of transition into adulthood; and 4) as a constructed identity.<sup>39</sup> Looking firstly at the so-called demographic bulge, there is no denying that the Arab world is home to an overwhelmingly young population, with 65% of all residents in this region being under 25 in 2012.<sup>40</sup> However, some demographic differences can be identified between the various countries in the Arab region. Tunisia's demographics skew towards an intermediate age structure, with 40% percent of the population being under-25.<sup>41</sup> This strongly contrasts with countries like Yemen, where the percentage of under-25s is closer to 70%.<sup>42</sup> When we consider the demographics in Western countries, however, even Tunisia's intermediate age structure appears strikingly young. Taking some European countries as examples, the under-25 population in 2014 lies at 29% in the UK, 23% in Germany, 24% in Italy, and 24% Greece.

A youthful demographic can have an undeniable impact on society and politics, particularly with regard to human resources.<sup>43</sup> Unemployment rates, for example, are often higher in countries with such a large proportion of young people. Considering that under-25s are a segment of the population less likely to have significant work experience, and taking into account the sparse employment opportunities even for the highly qualified, some assert that 'the spark that ignited the uprising was not a cry for democracy but a demand for jobs.'<sup>44</sup> Unemployment statistics certainly corroborate this theory, with unemployment standing at 30% among 15 to 24 year olds in Tunisia in 2010.<sup>45</sup> For the highly skilled youth, i.e. those with higher education, the rates were at a staggering 61%.<sup>46</sup>

The increasing enrolment demand on all education sectors has also posed a problem for young people, leaving many without the skills or qualifications necessary to compete in the job market. The struggle to find employment or to receive an appropriate education in order to develop their skills, leads to a generation that feels excluded and marginalized from society, unable to contribute to the working community and often lacking future prospects. Young people are thus prevented from

<sup>39</sup> Murphy, "Problematizing Arab Youth", 7.

<sup>40</sup> Floris, Sylvie. "Youth, those Anti-Heroes of the Arab Spring." *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook* (2012): 2. Accessed March 8, 2014. [http://www.iemed.org/observatori-en/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/Floris\\_en.pdf](http://www.iemed.org/observatori-en/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/Floris_en.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> Index Mundi. "Tunisia Demographics Profile." Accessed March 9, 2014. [http://www.indexmundi.com/tunisia/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/tunisia/demographics_profile.html).

<sup>42</sup> Inter Press Service News. "Young Yemen Multiplies Without Growth." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/06/young-yemen-multiplies-without-growth/>

<sup>43</sup> Murphy, "Problematizing Arab Youth", 7.

<sup>44</sup> El-Khawas, Mohamed A. "Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution: Causes and Impact." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2012): 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ilham Haouas, Edward Sayre, and Mahmoud Yagoubi. "Youth unemployment in Tunisia: Characteristics and policy responses." *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economies* 14 (2012): 404.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

entering the transitional phase into adulthood, as they cannot marry or even move out of their parents' home without a fixed income.<sup>47</sup>

This brings us to the final categorization of the Arab youth as an independent, constructed identity. Floris asserts that the youth in the Tunisian society 'were in a position of "sub-citizens," which explains why the first word to be chanted at demonstrations was "dignity"'.<sup>48</sup> The feeling of disaffection within this large youth segment was undoubtedly aggravated by the failure of the government to appropriately deal with the difficulties they faced. This failure can be largely affiliated to state corruption, repression, lack of investment in the underdeveloped central and western regions of the country, and an education system that did not provide young people with the skills required for the few employment opportunities available.<sup>49</sup> Three years after the revolution, Tunisia's unemployment rate has risen to 42% among young people,<sup>50</sup> indicating that the socio-economic problems facing them still remain. Although the circumstances that led to the Arab Spring cannot be simplified into one single issue, it is clear that the youth, frustrated with the difficulties directly affecting them and desiring a change from this 'sub-citizen' existence, were at the heart of the movement.

### Youth representation in Tunisian politics

The following section considers the extent to which the youth in Tunisia achieved the changes that they strove for. When regarding the level of satisfaction with politics, one of the first questions to ask is whether young people feel represented by the politicians in power, or simply whether they are being heard. In this regard, it seems that not much has changed. According to a poll conducted by the Al Jazeera Studies Centre in 2013, 81% of young people (17-31) do not feel represented by the Constituent Assembly, and only 14% claim that the revolution has been a success.<sup>51</sup> Tunisia Live, a news website created by a group of young Tunisians in the aftermath of the Tunisian Revolution, reported that in the 2011 parliamentary elections, only 17% of Tunisia's youth (aged 18 to 25) registered to vote.<sup>52</sup> Alarming, out of those who did vote in the 2011 election, 14% said they would not vote again.<sup>53</sup> Sarah Dickson's article on voter trend in Tunisia deals with the puzzling question of why some young people 'seem to have "given up" on the effectiveness of voting',<sup>54</sup> despite expressing an interest in political change. The interviews she conducted reveal a wide array of political opinions, but one unifying trend: although most young people were uninvolved in politics before the revolution, they have now become extremely interested in political developments.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Murphy, "Problematizing Arab Youth", 10.

<sup>48</sup> Floris, "Youth, those Anti-Heroes of the Arab Spring", 2.

<sup>49</sup> "Youth and the Tunisian Revolution." Conflict prevention and peace forum (2011): 12. Accessed March 9, 2014. [http://webarchive.ssrc.org/pdfs/Alcinda\\_Honwana\\_Youth\\_and\\_the\\_Tunisian\\_Revolution\\_September\\_2011-CPPF\\_policy%20paper.pdf](http://webarchive.ssrc.org/pdfs/Alcinda_Honwana_Youth_and_the_Tunisian_Revolution_September_2011-CPPF_policy%20paper.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Ulandssekretariatet. "Tunisia - Labour Market Profile 2013." Accessed March 9, 2014. [http://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/sites/default/files/uploads/public/PDF/LMP/tunisia\\_2013\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/sites/default/files/uploads/public/PDF/LMP/tunisia_2013_final_web.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> World Bulletin. "Arab youth feel alienated from politics." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=114200>.

<sup>52</sup> Tunisia Live. "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/06/14/tunisian-youth-between-political-exclusion-and-civic-engagement/#sthash.8tWklcpl.dpuf>.

<sup>53</sup> Dickson, Sarah. "To Vote or Not to Vote: Youth Political Agency in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia." Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection 4, no. 1 (2013): 8.

<sup>54</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 2.

<sup>55</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 13.

The disengagement from voting among the youth can be attributed to many factors, one of which is the persisting distrust of political parties and the political system in general.<sup>56</sup> Many were dissatisfied with the election results of 2011, and complained that the new government showed similar problems to the regime under Ben Ali. The fact that around a quarter of National Constituent Assembly (NCA) members switched party affiliations since they were elected only serves to worsen the situation.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, a consensus on what a democracy entails is still lacking in Tunisia; according to Dickson, a period of 'political learning' is required in order to transition to a long-lasting democratic system, but young Tunisians have not yet developed a 'collective sense of democratic values.'<sup>58</sup> Some young people even question how they can feel represented when many parties are still led by significantly older politicians.<sup>59</sup> Beji Caid Essebsi, leader of the secular party Nidaa Tounes is 88 years old, much older than the Tunisian life expectancy of 74, and was elected President in December 2014.<sup>60</sup>

### Youth involvement in traditional politics

Since much of the youth in Tunisia disapprove of the politicians in power, it is interesting to analyse the involvement of young people in traditional politics, i.e. as active policy makers. The National Constituent Assembly (NCA) is taken as an example here, as it was the first legislative body drafting policies and the new constitution after the Tunisian revolution. Out of 217 members of the NCA, 9 were under 30 (4%), while the vast majority were over 50 (76%).<sup>61</sup> These numbers are not entirely surprising, since an analysis of age structure of constituent representatives in many Western countries might reveal similarly low numbers of young people. What makes these figures a cause for concern is the aforementioned demographic youth 'bulge'. Considering that such a large proportion of the population is under 30, and this segment of society is arguably suffering the most from the current economical and political climate, it is worrisome that they only represent 4% of the NCA. However, many young people show no interest in being politicians themselves, or even being affiliated with political parties. From those who did join a party after the revolution, many withdrew after elections because they were disappointed with the strategies of these parties and the lack of cohesion and collaboration of ideas, especially between the younger and the older members. Young people interviewed by Tunisia Live claimed that belonging to a political party means committing to speak in the name of the party, which takes away the freedom to act or express personal opinions.<sup>62</sup> Few young people hold decision-making positions due to lack of political experience; and yet they are consistently denied opportunities to gain this experience. The new institution responsible for organizing and supervising the elections, Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections (ISIE), has been described as the authority responsible for 'ensuring democratic, free, pluralistic, fair and

<sup>56</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 5.

<sup>57</sup> Tunisia Live. "'Political Tourism' in the NCA: No Passport Necessary." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/07/03/political-tourism-all-the-rage-in-the-nca/>

<sup>58</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 10.

<sup>59</sup> Tunisia Live. "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/06/14/tunisian-youth-between-political-exclusion-and-civic-engagement/#sthash.8tWklcpl.dpuf>

<sup>60</sup> Washington Post. "An interview with Tunisia's Beji Caid Essebsi". Accessed March 9, 2014. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-interview-with-tunisias-beji-caid-essebsi-leading-voice-of-the-secular-opposition/2013/12/12/f40f6690-6344-11e3-aa81-e1dab1360323\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-interview-with-tunisias-beji-caid-essebsi-leading-voice-of-the-secular-opposition/2013/12/12/f40f6690-6344-11e3-aa81-e1dab1360323_story.html).

<sup>61</sup> Marsad. "L'Assemblée." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.marsad.tn/fr/assemblee>.

<sup>62</sup> Tunisia Live. "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/06/14/tunisian-youth-between-political-exclusion-and-civic-engagement/#sthash.8tWklcpl.dpuf>

transparent elections'.<sup>63</sup> However, this important political body has established a minimum age of 35 and at least 10 years of experience as prerequisites for membership, making young people automatically ineligible to apply for a position.

In the run-up to the legislative and presidential elections of 2014, some changes in favour of younger people can be observed in the political system. Around 40% of newly registered voters were between the ages of 18 and 30.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, due to amendments in the law regarding legislative elections, every electoral list must now contain at least one candidate under the age of 30 among the top 3 candidates on the list.<sup>65</sup> But despite the encouraging number of registered young voters, getting young people to turn up on voting day still poses a challenge. Many remain disconnected from the political process, blaming their reluctance to vote on the lack of reliable information and a distrust of political parties.<sup>66</sup> To counter this perception, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been working tirelessly to improve youth participation in Tunisian politics. According to Mohamed Madhkour, the liaison between the ISIE and Civil Society Organisations, 'young people in CSOs are a primary reason why [ISIE] received the [large] number of [voter] registrations from younger age groups.'<sup>67</sup>

### **Civil Society Organisations in Tunisia**

Frustrated with institutionalized political participation, there is a growing sentiment among the youth of Tunisia pointing to the idea that to really incite change, the best course of action is to work with civil society rather than to engage in traditional politics, with many now undertaking more informal paths towards building their nation's future. Tunisia has experienced a sudden wave of new youth-led civil society organizations (CSOs) since the Revolution, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith based organizations and more. Although CSOs existed under the Ben Ali regime, the restrictions on such groups made it very difficult for them to operate. These laws were reformed by the interim government after the revolution, providing CSOs and their donors and funders with freedom from 'oppressive legal impediments'.<sup>68</sup> These organizations have become an important part of the democratization process and have shaped political culture. The participation of civil society in the political process is generally seen as necessary and legitimate among democracy advocates. CSOs can generally take on two prevailing roles: Creating dialogue, and/or providing services. In the case of Tunisia, many CSOs tend to act as lobbyists, watchdogs against corruption, or educators of citizens' rights.

The organization 'I Watch Tunisia' for instance has been successful in exerting some influence in political decision-making. They have monitored the progress of the NCA on the Tunisian constitution, creating a website where people can voice their opinion, and vote on each article of the constitution.

<sup>63</sup> The International Republican Institute. "Tunisia Elections Dispatch." Accessed September 26, 2014. [http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2014%20July%2029%20Tunisia%20Elections%20Dispatch%20No.%201-Voter%20Registration\\_0.pdf](http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2014%20July%2029%20Tunisia%20Elections%20Dispatch%20No.%201-Voter%20Registration_0.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Kiran Alvi. "Will Tunisia's youth head to the ballots?". Accessed September 26, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/will-tunisia-youth-head-ballots-20149231189278322.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Jasmine Foundation. "Discussions on New Election Law Top Political and Media Agenda." Accessed September 26, 2014. <http://www.jasmine-foundation.org/en/?p=892>.

<sup>66</sup> Kiran Alvi. "Will Tunisia's youth head to the ballots?". Accessed September 26, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/will-tunisia-youth-head-ballots-20149231189278322.html>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Shelley Deane, "Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition." International Alert (2013): 12. Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/Tunisia2013EN.pdf>



Shortly after Tunisia's NCA was elected, 'I Watch Tunisia' also held a 'mock' assembly, i.e. a simulated version of the NCA, in which 217 youths from throughout Tunisia proposed legislation for their country's future. These suggestions were then brought before real NCA members as recommendations during a press conference. Some of the proposed legislations even caught the interest of the NCA members, who chose 3 of the recommendations for further development.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, 'I Watch Tunisia' hosted the International Anti-Corruption conference (IACC) in 2014, the first to be held in the Arab World. Mouheb Garoui, president of 'I Watch', talks about the importance of the event:

'This is an honour for the Tunisian civil society working on transparency and fighting corruption. It's a kind of official recognition of the role of youth in this transitional period.'<sup>70</sup>

For many young people, CSOs allow more political freedom as they do not involve partisan alliance, which in turn makes it easier to create dialogue between holders of opposing political ideologies. This is particularly important since much of the political scene in Tunisia is dominated by the conflict between secular and religious parties.<sup>71</sup>

In the context of the 2014 elections, CSOs have played a significant role in engaging the youth of Tunisia. More than 2,500 volunteers from 140 CSOs worked together with the ISIE to increase voter registration, with the majority of volunteers being under the age of 30.<sup>72</sup> The CSOs Swaty and I watch Tunisia organised events targeted at young people in a bid to 'take registration papers to them....rather than wait for them to come to us'.<sup>73</sup> Other CSOs aimed to help already registered young voters to make informed decisions on voting day. JID Tunisie (Independent Young Democrats of Tunisia) targeted the undecided or less politically active youth, helping them to find a political party that fits their interests. Al Bawsala, an organisation composed entirely of Tunisian activists under 30, has posted online the profiles of politicians running in the elections in order to help young people make more informed decisions.

However, there are limits on the extent to which CSOs are able to assist in achieving democratic change. The role of religion as a threat to this transition is an issue raised by some scholars: 'for every organisation in favour of democratization, there is likely to be another in favour of more conservative social values'.<sup>74</sup> Money can also be an issue for the sustained work of these organizations. Some rely on foreign funding, but this can raise questions over motivation and expectation. Foreign funding of CSOs can 'narrow the space for independent civil society', as it sometimes undermines home-grown initiatives.<sup>75</sup> A further limitation lies in the fact that the work of CSOs has not expanded in rural areas to the same extent that it has in urban regions of the country. Nonetheless, it seems that the rise in

<sup>69</sup> Tunisia Live. "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/06/14/tunisian-youth-between-political-exclusion-and-civic-engagement/#sthash.8tWklcpl.dpuf>

<sup>70</sup> The Tunis Times. "I Watch to host the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) 2014." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.thetunistimes.com/2013/10/i-watch-to-host-the-international-anti-corruption-conference-iacc-2014-2014/>.

<sup>71</sup> Reuters. "Tunisian secular parties merge to face Islamists." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/11/us-tunisia-parties-idUSTRE81A0LP20120211>

<sup>72</sup> Kiran Alvi. "Will Tunisia's youth head to the ballots?". Accessed September 26, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/will-tunisia-youth-head-ballots-20149231189278322.html>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Deane, "Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition", 21.

<sup>75</sup> Deane, "Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition", 13.

Civil Society Organizations has been a positive outcome from the revolution by allowing young people to become more engaged in politics.

### Social networking sites

Another relevant element of youth politics in Tunisia has been the Internet, or more specifically, social networking sites (SNS). It is commonly known that young activists successfully used social media to organize the protests in 2010/2011. But does the Internet play a political role in Tunisia today? Many would argue that social networking websites are indeed a major forum through which the youth can be politically involved. The study conducted by Dickson shows that many young people feel they are able to keep politically informed through Facebook: 'When asked how they are involved in politics, many reported that they post political statuses on Facebook to express their opinions.'<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, according to her study, the youth seemed 'excited and proud to be able to keep up with politics and share their opinions with others [online].'<sup>77</sup> Another study by Breuer and Groshek showed similarly positive findings. They claim that SNS are perceived by young people as a reliable source of political information and a safe forum for exchanging opinions.<sup>78</sup> The Internet has also taken on the role of 'uncensored news agency' allowing for free and more importantly – independent – news feeds.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, it can be a way for the Tunisian diaspora to be involved in the developments in their country.<sup>80</sup> Poell and Darmoni point out for example, that the use of Twitter during the revolution was of 'crucial importance for the transnational communication process'<sup>81</sup>, as it allowed those in Tunisia to reach diaspora networks, fostering quick diffusion of news.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the difficulties still facing the youth of Tunisia, and their disillusionment with election results after the Tunisian Revolution, it seems that the fall of Ben Ali brought about a change in attitude among young people. Youth engagement in Tunisian politics ranged from little to no involvement before the revolution due to Ben Ali's restrictive governance. The old system held control over almost every aspect of social society, including the media, CSOs, political parties and education. For many, taking a neutral stance seemed like the only viable option under the old regime.<sup>82</sup> In the aftermath of the revolution, drastic changes took place with regard to the involvement of Tunisia's youth in political movements. Most young people now express a real interest in the political developments of their country. How they find agency, however, can differ from person to person. Social media continues to play an important role in this population segment, just as it did during the protests. Facebook for example, has become a vital way to freely voice opinions on political issues. Furthermore, many young people seem to be drawn towards Civil Society Organisations rather than traditional political channels due to lingering problems of cohesion within

<sup>76</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 13.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Anita Breuer, and Jacob Groshek. "Online Media and Offline Empowerment in Post-Rebellion Tunisia: An Analysis of Internet Use During Democratic Transition." *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 11, no. 1 (2013): 40.

<sup>79</sup> Al Jazeera. "Tunisia: A media led revolution?" Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/01/2011116142317498666.html>.

<sup>80</sup> European Journal of Media Studies. "Twitter as a multilingual space: The articulation of the Tunisian revolution through #sidibouazid." Accessed March 9, 2014. <http://www.necus-ejms.org/twitter-as-a-multilingual-space-the-articulation-of-the-tunisian-revolution-through-sidibouazid-by-thomas-poell-and-kaouthar-darmoni/>.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Dickson, "To Vote or Not to Vote", 14.

party lines, distrust of the political system, restrictive age requirements, and a lack of information. As some scholars have observed, Tunisia is in a political learning process necessary for democratic transition. It remains to be seen how the situation will develop in the coming years, and whether this new attitude to politics will be enough to create lasting change.

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## Abbreviations List

CSO Civil Society Organisation

IACC International Anti-Corruption conference

NCA National Constituent Assembly

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

SNS Social Networking Sites

ISIE Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections/Independent High Authority for Elections